

**‘ĀHIHI-KĪNA‘U NAR
MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP
DRAFT MEETING NOTES**

Thursday, July 15, 2010
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary
New Building: 726 South Kīhei Road, Kīhei, Maui

Purposes

This is the first of two final meetings of the working group to finalize their process of developing a draft management plan for ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u NAR. In the meeting we:

- Reviewed the draft plan
- Reviewed the working group comment process and timeframe
- Discussed strategic communications for plan

In Attendance

Nicole Galase (DOFAW), Fern Duvall (DOFAW), Ann Turner (Volunteer), Betsy Gagne(DOFAW), Nicole Davis (NOAA), Bill Evanson (DOFAW), Jeff Bagshaw (HALE), Luna Kekoa (NOAA), Doug Peacock (Mākena Resident), Larry Stevens (Mākena Resident), Eric Takamura (Pelatron), Ann Fielding (Island Explorations), Meryl Cohen (Volunteer), Mona Kapaku (DHHL), Kuhea Paracuelles (Mayor’s Office), Alan Brown (MPD), Emily Fielding (TNC), Manuel Mejia (TNC), Evelyn Wight (TNC).

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| DHHL | State Department of Hawaiian Homelands |
| DOFAW | State Division of Forestry and Wildlife |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| HALE | Haleakalā National Park |
| MPD | Maui Police Department |
| TNC | The Nature Conservancy |

Presentation #1

The meeting began at 9:10 a.m. with opening remarks and introductions. The first presentation was an overview of the management plan and process by Emily Fielding. The presentation covered the following main points:

- Planning process to date (began in Nov 2008)
- Structure of draft plan (2 parts with 4 sections each)
- Process for working group review and input to finalize draft plan (draft plan will be given to WG members in hard copy and comments are due via email using a comment sheet by 7/26/10. Plan is undergoing simultaneous review by involved DLNR staff.)
- Discuss process to finalize the draft plan and next steps for taking the final draft plan to a broader audience (Comments due by email on 7/26/10 and the next working group meeting date is 8/2/10.)

Comments from the working group

- Betsy said need to give materials to NARSC at least 3 weeks early to allow all members to review it before the meeting.
- Where do 343 assessments come in? Individual actions and tasks are what invoke 343 – individual actions may require an EA. I wouldn't put this comment in about the AG
- What about implementation plans? How long will this management plan stand? (Management plans are sometimes not finalized to allow for more flexibility; this one is for 5 years.) Specify that implementation plans are separate, not included in the management plan.
- DOFAW/NARS wants to get public input on this process. Everything goes to OEQC so it's announced for review once the document is ready. Bill Evanson says we want as much public comment and input as possible.

Presentation #2

The second presentation was entitled *Conservation Finance for 'Āhihi-Kīna'u NAR, Exploring a more sustainable future* given by Manuel Mejia. The main points covered were:

- Why Conservation Finance is important to consider
- What are Ecotourism and User fees
- Examples of the use of such fees from other protected areas
- Reserve Basic Budget and Funding Gap
- Potential Revenue Sources for the Reserve (parking fee and guided hikes)

Comments from the working group

- Seems OK to charge a fee; in all the examples, visitorship increases after a fee is charged (and doesn't go down)
 - o Because of messages from volunteers and rangers about the closure (e.g., you don't have to walk as far), people who have visited the open areas have had positive experiences
- This area requires a large staff to be effective. Right now we have people there 14 hours a day (2 shifts) and it's not enough. (Question – does it take more people to manage for conservation vs. closure?)
- Bill E. reported that charging entry fees has multiple benefits
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 - o Security (thefts at Pali went down when a person was present informing visitors of the new fee)
- Are there any studies showing the perceived value of a place goes up when improvements are made (like parking lot paving) or when fees are charged?
 - o If that is true, how will we deal with the issue of popularity? When there is a lower # of visitors and they are managed, the quality of the visit goes up. People say A-K is a much better experience than Molokini. Do we need a fee system to keep it that way?
- Note to Manuel – need to incorporate inflation, cost of living increases, in salary tables for sustainable financing plan and operational budget
- Could we charge an entrance fee for the road (instead of just for parking)?

- What about La Perouse Bay parking and collecting a fee there? How will that area be affected by a parking fee at A-K?
- What about a road block with a fee at Mākena State Park? Entry fee could be a gateway for that whole area, and as a park they could do vending (sell A-K t-shirts, cups, and hats, etc.) and education/outreach about protection and conservation
- If that happens, can A-K still charge a parking fee that would allow money to go directly into A-K, not just into general funds?

Presentation #3

The third and final presentation of the morning was on the need and value of strategic communications for the NAR management plan once it is completed by Evelyn Wight.

The main points covered were:

- Why strategic communications are needed
- Steps to success:
 - Clear objectives
 - Clear, consistent messages and communications tools
 - Credible, engaged messengers and spokespeople
 - Pre-planning for objections, opposition or crisis
 - Demonstrable support

A small group was formed to develop a strategic communication strategy for the management plan. The volunteers are:

1. Evelyn Wight
2. Bill Evanson
3. Mona Kapaku
4. Nicole Galase
5. Meryl Cohen
6. Kuhea Paracuelles
7. Ann Fielding
8. Jeff Bagshaw
9. Emily Fielding
10. Manuel Mejia

Comments from public

- Health, sanitation and camping issues in the region of the A-K NAR and Mākena State Park, largely on state land. Need human presence. Observed poaching. Death at Little Beach recently.
- Mākena State Park plan from 1977 doesn't address current issues that may turn away visitors and residents from the area.
- Education needed.
- Rangers and volunteers do a great job.
- People know when the officials leave (at 6pm) and that's when they come out (you can see flashlights go through the reserve at night)
- The area from 7150 Mākena to the small cove right before the A-K NAR is a mess.

Mākena Road MOU Update by Kuhea Paracuelles

- Kuhea reported on the progress of an agreement between state and county about the road on enforcement, maintenance and access issues
- Currently agreement is before the Maui County Council Chair. Kuhea will meet with Council Member Molina on 7/26 where she will advocate for the MOU to go before the full council.
- Kuhea will update state reps (John Cumming and Betsy Gagne) so state and county can coordinate.
- Will the MOU allow for fees to be collected on the road?

Next Steps

- Comments due from working group members to Emily by email comment sheet by close of business 7/26/10.
- Next meeting of the working group is on Monday 8/2/10 from 9-4 in this same location.
- The working group meeting on 8/2 will be built around the need to address and discuss comments received from the working group
- Other items to be covered on 8/2 may include:
 - Prioritization of 44 actions
 - Clarify in the plan what are the assumptions/proposals inherent
 - Revisit input for working group on incomplete sections
 - Include NAR meetings and BLNR meeting schedules in planning at 8/2 meeting
 - Strategic communications